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To dear "Bill"

Tom

Stoll

December 11, 1912.

THE BELLS AND OTHER POEMS



THE BELLS and other Poems

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
EDMUND DULAC



HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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THE BELLS

What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
 On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
 How it swells!
 How it dwells
 On the Future! how it tells
 Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
 Of the bells, bells, bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III.

Hear the loud alarum bells—
 Brazen bells!

THE BELLS

What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!

In the startled ear of night

How they scream out their affright!

Too much horrified to speak

They can only shriek, shriek,

Out of tune,

In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,

In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,

Leaping higher, higher, higher,

With a desperate desire,

And a resolute endeavour.

Now—now to sit or never,

By the side of the pale-faced moon.

Oh, the bells, bells, bells!

What a tale their terror tells

Of Despair!

How they clang, and clash, and roar!

What a horror they outpour

THE BELLS

On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows:
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamour and the clangour of the bells!

IV.

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!

THE BELLS

What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!

In the silence of the night,

How we shiver with affright

At the melancholy menace of their tone!

For every sound that floats

From the rust within their throats

Is a groan.

And the people—ah, the people—

They that dwell up in the steeple,

All alone,

And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,

In that muffled monotone,

Feel a glory in so rolling

On the human heart a stone—

They are neither man nor woman—

They are neither brute nor human—

They are Ghouls:

And their king it is who tolls;

THE BELLS

And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls

A paeon from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the paeon of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the paeon of the bells—

Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—

To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,

THE BELLS

To the rolling of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells :
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells—
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

EULALIE—A SONG

I DWELT alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing
bride—
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling
bride.

Ah, less—less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
And never a flake
That the vapour can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,

EULALIE—A SONG

Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded
curl—

Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble
and careless curl.

Now doubt—now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines, bright and strong,
Astarté within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron
eye—
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

ANNABEL LEE

IT was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
 By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love which was more than love—
 I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

ANNABEL LEE

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee ;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—
 Of many far wiser than we—

ANNABEL LEE

And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

SONNET—SILENCE

THERE are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a two-fold *Silence*—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's 'No More.'
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!
No power hath he of evil in himself;





SONNET—SILENCE

But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)

Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God!



THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak
and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten
lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came
a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber
door.

The Raven





THE RAVEN

‘Tis some visitor,’ I muttered, ‘tapping at my chamber door—

Only this, and nothing more.’

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon
the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to
borrow

From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the
lost Lenore—

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore—

Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple
curtain

THE RAVEN

Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt
before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I
stood repeating,

‘Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber
door—

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber
door;—

This it is, and nothing more.’

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no
longer,

‘Sir,’ said I, ‘or Madam, truly your forgiveness I
implore;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came
rapping,

And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber
door,

THE RAVEN

That I scarce was sure I heard you,'—here I opened
wide the door;—

Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there
wondering, fearing,

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to
dream before ;

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no
token,

And the only word there spoken was the whispered
word, 'Lenore!'

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the
word, 'Lenore!'—

Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me
burning,

THE RAVEN

Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than
before.

'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is something at my window
lattice :

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery
explore—

Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery
explore ;—

'Tis the wind and nothing more.'

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt
and flutter,

In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of
yore ;

Not the least obeisance made he ; not a minute stopped
or stayed he ;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my
chamber door—

THE RAVEN

Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door—

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into
smiling,

By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it
wore,

‘Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,’ I said,
‘art sure no craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the
Nightly shore—

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s
Plutonian shore!’

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse
so plainly,

THE RAVEN

Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore ;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human
being

Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber
door—

Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber
door,

With such name as ‘Nevermore.’

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke
only

That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did
outpour.

Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather then he
fluttered—

Till I scarcely more than muttered, ‘other friends have
flown before—

THE RAVEN

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have
flown before.'

Then the bird said, 'Nevermore.'

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its only stock and
store,

Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful
Disaster

Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one
burden bore—

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden
bore

Of "Never—nevermore".'

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into
smiling,

THE RAVEN

Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird,
and bust and door ;

Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to
linking

Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of
yore—

What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous
bird of yore

Meant in croaking ‘Nevermore.’

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable ex-
pressing

To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my
bosom’s core ;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease
reclining

On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamplight gloated
o’er,

THE RAVEN

But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight
gloating o'er,

She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed from
an unseen censer

Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted
floor.

'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent thee—by these
angels he hath sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe, from thy memories of
Lenore!

Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost
Lenore!'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil!—prophet still, if
bird or devil!—

THE RAVEN

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee
here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land en-
chanted—

On this home by horror haunted—tell me truly, I
implore—

Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me,
I implore!

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

‘Prophet!’ said I, ‘thing of evil—prophet still, if bird
or devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we
both adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant
Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name
Lenore—

THE RAVEN

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore.'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

'Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend,' I
shrieked, upstarting—

'Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's
Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul
hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my
door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form
from off my door!'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is
sitting

THE RAVEN

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,

And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow
on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on
the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore!

TO ONE IN PARADISE

THOU wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream to bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
'On! on!'—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

TO ONE IN PARADISE

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
'No more—no more—no more—'
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree
Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy grey eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.



LENORE

AH, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian
river;
And, Guy de Vere, hast *thou* no tear?—weep now or
nevermore!
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love,
Lenore!

LENORE

Come! let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be
sung!—

An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so
young—

A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so
young.

‘Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her
for her pride,

And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her—
that she died!

How *shall* the ritual, then, be read?—the requiem how
be sung

By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours, the
slandrous tongue

That did to death the innocence that died, and died so
young?’

LENORE

Peccavimus; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong
The sweet Lenore hath 'gone before,' with Hope, that
 flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have
 been thy bride—
For her, the fair and *debonair*, that now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes—
The life still there, upon her hair—the death upon her
 eyes.

'Avaunt! avaunt! from fiends below, the indignant
 ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the
 Heaven—
From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the
 King of Heaven!

LENORE

Let no bell toll, then,—lest her soul, amid its hallowed
mirth,

Should catch the note as it doth float up from the
damnèd Earth!

And I!—to-night my heart is light!—no dirge will I
upraise,

But waft the angel on her flight with a Paean of old
days!'

DREAMS

OH! that my young life were a lasting dream!
My spirit not awakening, till the beam
Of an Eternity should bring the morrow.
Yes! tho' that long dream were of hopeless sorrow,
'Twere better than the cold reality
Of waking life, to him whose heart must be,
And hath been still, upon the lovely earth,
A chaos of deep passion, from his birth.
But should it be—that dream eternally
Continuing—as dreams have been to me
In my young boyhood—should it thus be given,

DREAMS

'Twere folly still to hope for higher Heaven.
For I have revell'd, when the sun was bright
I' the summer sky, in dreams of living light
And loveliness,—have left my very heart
In climes of my imagining, apart
From mine own home, with beings that have been
Of mine own thought—what more could I have seen?
'Twas once—and only once—and the wild hour
From my remembrance shall not pass—some power
Or spell had bound me—'twas the chilly wind
Came o'er me in the night, and left behind
Its image on my spirit—or the moon
Shone on my slumbers in her lofty noon
Too coldly—or the stars—howe'er it was
That dream was as that night-wind—let it pass.
I *have been* happy, tho' in a dream.
I have been happy—and I love the theme :
Dreams! in their vivid colouring of life,

DREAMS

As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife
Of semblance with reality, which brings
To the delirious eye, more lovely things
Of Paradise and Love—and all our own!
Than young Hope in his sunniest hour hath known.

TO HELEN

[Helen was Mrs. Whitman.]

I SAW thee once—once only—years ago :
I must not say *how* many—but *not* many.
It was a July midnight ; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
Upon the upturned faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe—

TO HELEN

Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half-reclining; while the moon
Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturn'd—alas, in sorrow!

Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—
Was it not Fate, (whose name is also Sorrow,)
That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?
No footstep stirred: the hated world all slept,
Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven!—oh, God!

TO HELEN

How my heart beats in coupling those two words!
Save only thee and me. I paused—I looked—
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!)

The pearly lustre of the moon went out:
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,
Were seen no more: the very roses' odours
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
All—all expired save thee—save less than thou:
Save only the divine light in thine eyes—
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.
I saw but them—they were the world to me!
I saw but them—saw only them for hours,
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres!

TO HELEN

How dark a woe, yet how sublime a hope!
How silently serene a sea of pride!
How daring an ambition; yet how deep—
How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained;*
They *would not* go—they never yet have gone;
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
They have not left me (as my hopes have) since;
They follow me—they lead me through the years.
They are my ministers—yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle—
My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire.

TO HELEN

They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope),
And are far up in Heaven—the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun!

THE HAUNTED PALACE

IN the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion—
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago,)

THE HAUNTED PALACE

And every gentle air that dallied,
 In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
 A wingèd odour went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
 Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
 To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
 (Porphyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
 The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
 Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
 And sparkling evermore,

THE HAUNTED PALACE

A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,

THE HAUNTED PALACE

While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out for ever
And laugh—but smile no more.

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

TAKE this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow—
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone*?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?



THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves ;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed ;
For no ripples curl, alas !
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

TO F——

[F—— is, presumably, Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood]

BELOVED! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path—
(Drear path, alas! where grows
Not even one lonely rose)—
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea—
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

THE SLEEPER

At midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapour, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake

THE SLEEPER

A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
Irene, with her Destinies!

O, lady bright! can it be right—
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop—
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully—so fearfully—
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?

THE SLEEPER

Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress,
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
For ever with unopened eye,
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep
As it is lasting, so be deep!

THE SLEEPER

Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft has flung its black
And wingèd panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
Of her grand family funerals—
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!
It was the dead who groaned within.

ULALUME

THE skies they were ashen and sober ;
 The leaves they were crisped and sere—
 The leaves they were withering and sere ;
It was night in the lonesome October
 Of my most immemorial year ;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
 In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.

ULALUME

These were days when my heart was volcanic
 As the scoriac rivers that roll—
 As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
 In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
 In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
 But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
 Our memories were treacherous and sere—
For we knew not the month was October,
 And we marked not the night of the year—
 (Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
 (Though once we had journeyed down here),
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

ULALUME

And now, as the night was senescent,
 And star-dials pointed to morn—
 As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
 And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
 Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—'She is warmer than Dian :
 She rolls through an ether of sighs—
 She revels in a region of sighs :
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion,
 To point us the path to the skies—
 To the Lethean peace of the skies—

ULALUME

Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes.'

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
 Said—' Sadly this star I mistrust—
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust :—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
 Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must.'
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
 Wings until they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—' This is nothing but dreaming :
 Let us on by this tremulous light!
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light!

ULALUME

Its Sybilic splendour is beaming
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night :—
 See!—it flickers up the sky through the night !
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
 And be sure it will lead us aright—
We safely may trust to a gleaming
 That cannot but guide us aright,
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night.'

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
 And tempted her out of her gloom—
 And conquered her scruples and gloom ;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
 By the door of a legended tomb ;
And I said—' What is written, sweet sister,
 On the door of this legended tomb?'

ULALUME

She replied—‘Ulalume—Ulalume—
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!’

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crisped and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere ;
And I cried—‘It was surely October
On *this* very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.’

ROMANCE

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say—
To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

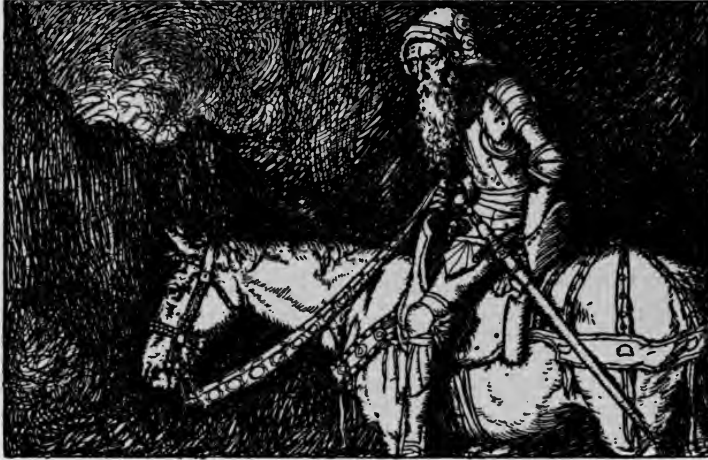
Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high

ROMANCE

With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

SONNET—TO SCIENCE

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?



ELDORADO

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

ELDORADO

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,

ELDORADO

Ride, boldly ride,
The shade replied—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

TO M——

O! I care not that my earthly lot
Hath little of Earth in it,
That years of love have been forgot
In the fever of a minute:

I heed not that the desolate
Are happier, sweet, than I,
But that you meddle with my fate
Who am a passer by.

It *is* not that my founts of bliss
Are gushing—strange! with tears—
Or that the thrill of a single kiss
Hath palsied many years—

TO M——

'Tis not that the flowers of twenty springs
Which have wither'd as they rose
Lie dead on my heart-strings
With the weight of an age of snows.

Not that the grass—O! may it thrive!
On my grave is growing or grown—
But that, while I am dead yet alive
I cannot be, lady, alone.

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo! 'tis a gala night

 Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight

 In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see

 A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,

 Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—

 Mere puppets they, who come and go

THE CONQUEROR WORM

At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
Invisible Woe!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!

THE CONQUEROR WORM

It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, ‘Man,’
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

SONNET—TO ZANTE

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake!
How many scenes of what departed bliss!
How many thoughts of what entombèd hopes!
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more—no more upon thy verdant slopes!
No more! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all! Thy charms shall please *no more*—
Thy memory *no more!* Accursèd ground
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!
'Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!'

TO M. L. S.—

[Mrs. Marie Louise Shew.]

OF all who hail thy presence as the morning—
Of all to whom thine absence is the night—
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun—of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope—for life—ah! above all,
For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
In Truth—in Virtue—in Humanity—
Of all who, on Despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, 'Let there be light!'
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled

TO M. L. S.—

In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes—
Of all who owe thee most—whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship—oh, remember
The truest—the most fervently devoted,
And think that these weak lines are written by him—
By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

TO THE RIVER —

FAIR river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty—the unhidden heart—
The playful mazziness of art
In old Alberto's daughter;

But when within thy wave she looks—
Which glistens then, and trembles—
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles;
For in my heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies—
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.

A DREAM

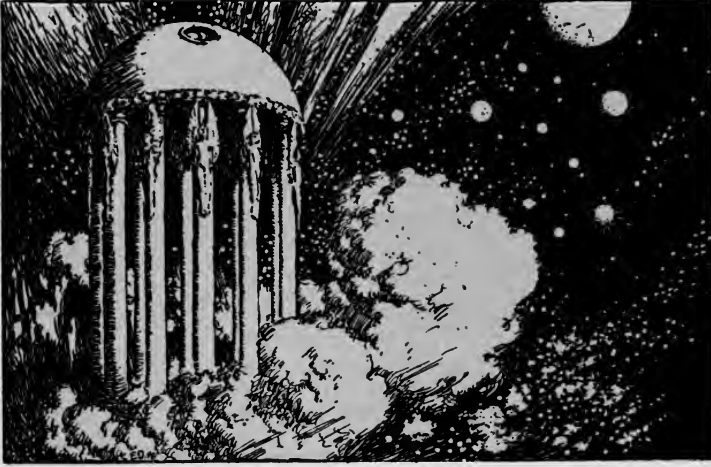
In visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed—
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him with a ray
Turned back upon the past?

That holy dream—that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam,
A lonely spirit guiding.

A DREAM

What though that light, thro' storm and night,
So trembled from afar—
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star?



AL AARAAF

PART I.

O! NOTHING earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the gems of Circassy—

AL AARAAF

O! nothing earthly save the thrill
Of melody in woodland rill—
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy's voice so peacefully departed
That like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell—
Oh, nothing of the dross of ours—
Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
That list our Love, and deck our bowers—
Adorn yon world afar, afar—
The wandering star.

'Twas a sweet time for Nesace—for there
Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
Near four bright suns—a temporary rest—
An oasis in desert of the blest.
Away—away—'mid seas of rays that roll
Empyrean splendour o'er th' unchained soul—

AL AARAAF

The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
Can struggle to its destin'd eminence,—
To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode
And late to ours, the favour'd one of God—
But, now, the ruler of an anchor'd realm,
She throws aside the sceptre—leaves the helm,
And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth,
Whence sprang the ' Idea of Beauty ' into birth,
(Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,
Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt)
She looked into Infinity—and knelt.
Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled—
Fit emblems of the model of her world—
Seen but in beauty—not impeding sight

AL AARAAF

Of other beauty glittering thro' the light—
A wreath that twined each starry form around,
And all the opal'd air in colour bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
Of flowers: of lilies such as rear'd the head
On the fair Capo Deucato, and sprang
So eagerly around about to hang
Upon the flying footsteps of—deep pride—
Of her who lov'd a mortal—and so died.
The Sephalica, budding with young bees,
Upcreed its purple stem around her knees:—
And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam'd—
Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham'd
All other loveliness:—its honied dew
(The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)
Deliriously sweet, was dropp'd from Heaven.
And fell on gardens of the unforgiven

AL AARAAF

In Trebizond—and on a sunny flower
So like its own above that, to this hour,
It still remaineth, torturing the bee
With madness, and unwonted reverie :
In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf
And blossom of the fairy plant in grief
Disconsolate linger—grief that hangs her head,
Repenting follies that full long have fled,
Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
Like guilty beauty, chasten'd and more fair :
Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light
She fears to perfume, perfuming the night :
And Clytia, pondering between many a sun,
While pettish tears adown her petals run :
And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth,
And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,
Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing
Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king :

AL AARAAF

And Valisnerian lotus, thither flown
From struggling with the waters of the Rhone:
And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante!
Isola d'oro!—Fior di Levante!
And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever
With Indian Cupid down the holy river—
Fair flowers, and fairy! to whose care is given
To bear the Goddess' song, in odours, up to Heaven

‘ Spirit! thou dwellest where,
 In the deep sky,
The terrible and fair,
 In beauty vie!
Beyond the line of blue—
 The boundary of the star
Which turneth at the view
 Of thy barrier and thy bar—
Of the barrier overgone

AL AARRAAF

By the comets who were cast
From their pride and from their throne
 To be drudges till the last—
To be carriers of fire
 (The red fire of their heart)
With speed that may not tire
 And with pain that shall not part—
Who livest—*that* we know—
 In Eternity—we feel—
But the shadow of whose brow
 What spirit shall reveal?
Tho' the beings whom thy Nesace,
 Thy messenger hath known
Have dream'd for thy Infinity
 A model of their own—
Thy will is done, O God!
 The star hath ridden high
Thro' many a tempest, but she rode

AL AARAAF

Beneath thy burning eye ;
And here, in thought, to thee—
In thought that can alone
Ascend thy empire and so be
A partner of thy throne—
By wingèd Fantasy,
My embassy is given,
Till secrecy shall knowledge be
In the environs of Heaven.'

She ceas'd—and buried then her burning cheek
Abash'd, amid the lilies there, too seek
A shelter from the fervour of His eye ;
For the stars trembled at the Deity.
She stirr'd not—breath'd not—for a voice was there
How solemnly pervading the calm air !
A sound of silence on the startled ear
Which dreamy poets name 'the music of the sphere.'

AL AARAAF

O! is it thy will
 On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
 Like the lone Albatross,
Incumbent on night
 (As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
 On the harmony there?

Ligeia! wherever
 Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
 Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
 In a dreamy sleep—
But the strains still arise
 Which *thy* vigilance keep—
The sound of the rain,

x

AL AARAAF

Which leaps down to the flower—
And dances again

In the rhythm of the shower—
The murmur that springs

From the growing of grass
Are the music of things—

But are modell'd, alas!—
Away, then, my dearest,

Oh! hie thee away
To the springs that lie clearest

Beneath the moon-ray—
To lone lake that smiles,

In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles

That enjewel its breast—
Where wild flowers, creeping,

Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping

AL AARAAF

Full many a maid—
Some have left the cool glade, and
Have slept with the bee—
Arouse them, my maiden,
On moorland and lea—
Go! breathe on their slumber,
All softly in ear,
Thy musical number
They slumbered to hear—
For what can awaken
An angel so soon,
Whose sleep hath been taken
Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber
Of witchery may test,
The rhythmical number
Which lull'd him to rest?'

AL AARAAF

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,
A thousand seraphs burst th' Empyrean thro'
Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight—
Seraphs in all but ' Knowledge,' the keen light
That fell, refracted, thro' thy bounds, afar,
O Death! from eye of God upon that star :
Sweet was that error—sweeter still that death—
Sweet was that error—even with *us* the breath
Of Science dims the mirror of our joy—
To them 'twere the Simoom, and would destroy—
For what (to them) availeth it to know
That Truth is Falsehood—or that Bliss is Woe?
Sweet was their death—with them to die was rife
With the last ecstasy of satiate life—
Beyond that death no immortality—
But sleep that pondereth and is not ' to be '—
And there!—oh! may my weary spirit dwell—
Apart from Heaven's Eternity—and yet how far from Hell!

AL AARAAF

What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?
But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts
To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover—
O! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)
Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known?
Unguided Love hath fallen—'mid 'tears of perfect
moan.'

He was a goodly spirit—he who fell:
A wanderer by moss-y-mantled well—
A gazer on the lights that shine above—
A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love:
What wonder? for each star is eye-like there,
And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair—
And they, and ev'ry mossy spring were holy
To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.

AL AARAAF

The night had found (to him a night of woe)
Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo—
Beetling it bends athwart the solemn sky,
And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
Here sat he with his love—his dark eye bent
With eagle gaze along the firmament:
Now turn'd it upon her—but ever then
It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

'Ianthe, dearest, see—how dim that ray!
How lovely 'tis to look so far away!
She seem'd not thus upon that autumn eve
I left her gorgeous halls—nor mourn'd to leave.
That eve—that eve—I should remember well—
The sun-ray dropp'd in Lemnos, with a spell
On th' arabesque carving of a gilded hall
Wherein I sate, and on the draperied wall—
And on my eyelids—O the heavy light!

AL AARAAF

How drowsily it weigh'd them into night!
On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan:
But O that light!—I slumber'd—Death, the while,
Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle
So softly that no single silken hair
Awoke that slept—or knew that he was there.

' The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon
Was a proud temple called the Parthenon;
More beauty clung around her column'd wall
Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal,
And when old Time my wing did disenthral
Thence sprang I—as the eagle from his tower,
And years I left behind me in an hour.
What time upon her airy bounds I hung,
One half the garden of her globe was flung
Unrolling as a chart unto my view—

AL AARAAF

Tenantless cities of the desert too!
Ianthe, beauty crowded on me then,
And half I wish'd to be again of men.'

' My Angelo! and why of them to be?
A brighter dwelling place is here for thee—
And greener fields than in yon world above,
And woman's loveliness—and passionate love.'

' But, list, Ianthe! when the air so soft
Fail'd, as my pennon'd spirit leapt aloft,
Perhaps my brain grew dizzy—but the world
I left so late was into chaos hurl'd—
Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
And roll'd, a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.
Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar
And fell—not swiftly as I rose before,
But with a downward, tremulous motion thro'

AL AARAAF

Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
‘ Silence ’—which is the merest word of all.
All Nature speaks, and ev’n ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings—
But ah! not so when, thus, in realms on high
The eternal voice of God is passing by,
And the red winds are withering in the sky:—

‘ What tho’ in worlds which sightless cycles run
Linked to a little system, and one sun—
Where all my life is folly and the crowd
Still think my terrors but the thunder cloud,
The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath—
(Ah! will they cross me in my angrier path?)
What tho’ in world which hold a single sun
The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run,
Yet thine is my resplendency, so given
To bear my secrets thro’ the upper Heaven

AL AARAAF

Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
With all thy train, athwart the moony sky—
Apart—like fire-flies in the Sicilian night,
And wing to other worlds another light!
Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
To the proud orbs that twinkle—and so be
To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban
Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man!'

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
The single-moonèd eve!—on Earth we plight
Our faith to one love—and one moon adore—
The birth-place of young Beauty had no more.
As sprang that yellow star from downy hours
Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
And bent o'er sheeny mountains and dim plain
Her way, but left not yet her Therasæan reign.

PART II.

HIGH on a mountain of enamell'd head—
Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed
Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
With many a mutter'd 'hope to be forgiven'
What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven—
Of Rosy head that, towering far away
Into the sunlight ether, caught the ray
Of sunken suns at eve—at noon of night,
While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger light—
Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile
Of gorgeous columns on th' unburthen'd air,
Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
And nursled the young mountain in its lair.

AL AARAAF

Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall
Thro' the ebon air, besilvering the pall
Of their own dissolution, while they die—
Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.
A dome, by linkèd light from Heaven let down,
Sat gently on these columns as a crown—
A window of one circular diamond, there,
Look'd out above into the purple air,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,
Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.
But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
The dimness of this world: that greyish green
That Nature love's the best for Beauty's grave
Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave—
And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout
That from his marble dwelling peerèd out,

AL AARRAAF

Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche—
Achaian statues in a world so rich?
Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis—
From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss
Of beautiful Gomorrah! O, the wave
Is now upon thee—but too late to save!

Sound loves to revel in a summer night:
Witness the murmur of the grey twilight
That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,
Of many a wild star-gazer long ago—
That stealeth ever on the ear of him
Who, musing, gazeth on the distant dim,
And sees the darkness coming as a cloud—
Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and loud?

But what is this?—it cometh, and it brings
A music with it—'tis the rush of wings—
A pause—and then a sweeping, falling strain

AL AARAAF

And Nesace is in her halls again.
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart ;
And zone that clung around her gentle waist
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
Within the centre of that hall to breathe,
She paused and panted, Zanthé ! all beneath,
The fairy light that kiss'd her golden hair
And long'd to rest, yet could but sparkle there.

Young flowers were whispering in melody
To happy flowers that night—and tree to tree ;
Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a star-lit grove, or moon-lit dell ;
Yet silence came upon material things—
Fair flowers, bright waterfalls and angel wings—
And sound alone that from the spirit sprang
Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang :

AL AARAAF

'Neath the blue-bell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,
The moonbeam away—
Bright beings! that ponder,
With half closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro' the shade, and
Come down to your brow
Like——eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now—
Arise! from your dreaming
In violet bowers,
To duty beseeming
These star-litten hours—
And shake from your tresses
Encumber'd with dew

AL AARAAF

The breath of those kisses
That cumber them too—
(O! how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)
Those kisses of true Love
That lull'd ye to rest!
Up!—shake from your wing
Each hindering thing:
The dew of the night—
It would weigh down your flight;
And true love caresses—
O, leave them apart!
They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,

AL AARAAF

Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto!
Nor long the measure of my falling hours,
For nearest of all stars was thine to ours—
Dread star! that came, amid a night of mirth,
A red Daedalion on the timid Earth.'

' We came—and to thy Earth—but not to us
Be given our lady's bidding to discuss:
We came, my love; around, above, below,
Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,
Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod
She grants to us, as granted by her God—
But, Angelo, than thine grey Time unfurl'd
Never his fairy wing o'er fairier world!
Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be
Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea—

AL AARAAF

But when its glory swell'd upon the sky,
As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,
We paused before the heritage of men,
And thy star trembled—as doth Beauty then!'

Thus, in discourse, the lovers whiled away
The night that waned and waned and brought no
day.

They fell: for Heaven to them no hope imparts
Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

TO F——S S. O——D

[Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood]

THOU wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not!
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love—a simple duty.

BRIDAL BALLAD

THE ring is on my hand,
 And the wreath is on my brow ;
Satin and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
 And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well ;
 But, when first he breathed his vow,
I felt my bosom swell—
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed *his* who fell

BRIDAL BALLAD

In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

- But he spoke to re-assure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a reverie came o'er me,
And to the church-yard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
'Oh, I am happy now!'

And thus the words were spoken,
And this the plighted vow,
And, though my faith be broken,
And, though my heart be broken,
Here is a ring, as token
That I am happy now!

BRIDAL BALLAD

Would God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how!
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,—
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.



TO MY MOTHER

[His Mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm.]

BECAUSE I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of 'Mother,'
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you—
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

TO HELEN

[‘Helen’ was Mrs. Stannard, whose death also inspired Lenore.]

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o’er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.



TO HELEN

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!



THE VALLEY OF UNREST

ONCE it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell ;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,



THE VALLEY OF UNREST

In the midst of which all day
The red sunlight lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant tops

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

Eternal dews come down in drops.

They weep:—from off their delicate stems

Perennial tears descend in gems.

THE LAKE—TO ———

IN spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less—
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody—
Then—ah then I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake

THE LAKE—TO ———

Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight—
A feeling not the jewelled mine
Could teach or bribe me to define—
Nor Love—although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring
To his lone imagining—
Whose solitary sole could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

*THE HAPPIEST DAY, THE HAPPIEST
HOUR*

THE happiest day—the happiest hour
My sear'd and blighted heart hath known,
The highest hope of pride and power,
I feel hath flown.

Of power! said I? yes! such I ween;
But they have vanish'd long, alas!
The visions of my youth have been—
But let them pass.

THE HAPPIEST DAY

And, pride, what have I now with thee?

Another brow may even inherit
The venom thou hast pour'd on me—
Be still, my spirit!

The happiest day—the happiest hour
Mine eyes shall see—have ever seen,
The brightest glance of pride and power,
I feel—have been :

But were that hope of pride and power
Now offer'd, with the pain
Even *then* I felt—that brightest hour
I would not live again :

For on its wing was dark alloy,
And, as it flutter'd—fell
An essence—powerful to destroy
A soul that knew it well.

CATHOLIC HYMN

AT morn—at noon—at twilight dim—
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and woe—in good and ill—
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

TO ———

[Mrs. Marie Louise Shew.]

NOR long ago, the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality,
Maintained 'the power of words'—denied that ever
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue:
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit 'dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,'
Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,

TO ———

Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions
Than even seraph harper, Israfel,
(Who has 'the sweetest voice of all God's creatures,')
Could hope to utter. And I! my spells are broken.
The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
I cannot write—I cannot speak or think—
Alas, I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling,
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams.
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
Upon the left, and all the way along,
Amid empurpled vapours, far away
To where the prospect terminates—*thee only*.

EVENING STAR

'TWAS noontide of summer,
And mid-time of night ;
And stars in their orbits,
Shone pale, thro' the light
Of the brighter, cold moon,
'Mid planets her slaves,
Herself in the Heavens,
Her beam on the waves.
I gazed awhile
On her cold smile ;
Too cold—too cold for me—

EVENING STAR

There pass'd, as a shroud,
A fleecy cloud,
And I turn'd away to thee,
Proud Evening Star,
In thy glory afar,
And dearer thy beam shall be ;
For joy to my heart
Is the proud part
Thou bearest in Heaven at night,
And more I admire
Thy distant fire,
Than that colder, lowly light.

STANZAS

How often we forget all time, when lone
Admiring Nature's universal throne ;
Her woods—her wilds—her mountains—the intense
Reply of HERS to OUR intelligence !

[BYRON, *The Island.*]

I

IN youth have I known one with whom the Earth
In secret communing held—as he with it,
In daylight, and in beauty from his birth :
Whose fervid, flickering torch of life was lit
From the sun and stars, whence he had drawn forth
A passionate light—such for his spirit was fit—

STANZAS

And yet that spirit knew not, in the hour
Of its own fervour—what had o'er it power.

2

Perhaps it may be that my mind is wrought
To a fever by the moonbeam that hangs o'er,
But I will half believe that wild light fraught
With more of sovereignty than ancient lore
Hath ever told—or is it of a thought
The unembodied essence, and no more
That with a quickening spell doth o'er us pass
As dew of the night-time o'er the summer grass?

3

Doth o'er us pass, when, as th' expanding eye
To the loved object—so the tear to the lid
Will start, which lately slept in apathy?
And yet it need not be—(that object) hid

STANZAS

From us in life—but common—which doth lie
Each hour before us—but *then* only, bid
With a strange sound, as of a harp-string broken,
To awake us—'Tis a symbol and a token

4

Of what in other worlds shall be—and given
In beauty by our God, to those alone
Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven
Drawn by their heart's passion, and that tone,
That high tone of the spirit which hath striven
Tho' not with Faith—with godliness—whose throne
With desperate energy 't hath beaten down;
Wearing its own deep feeling as a crown.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

THY soul shall find itself alone
'Mid dark thoughts of the grey tomb-stone;
Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
Into thine hour of secrecy.

Be silent in that solitude,
Which is not loneliness—for then
The spirits of the dead, who stood
In life before thee, are again

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

In death around thee, and their will
Shall overshadow thee ; be still.

The night, though clear, shall frown,
And the stars shall not look down
From their high thrones in the Heaven
With light like hope to mortals given,
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy weariness shall seem
As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee for ever.

Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish,
Now are visions ne'er to vanish ;
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more, like dew-drop from the grass.
The breeze, the breath of God, is still,
And the mist upon the hill

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

Shadowy, shadowy, yet unbroken,
Is a symbol and a token.
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries!



ISRAFEL

And the angel Israfil, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—*Koran*.

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
 ' Whose heart-strings are a lute ;'
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfil,

ISRAFEL

And the giddy Stars (so legends tell)
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamoured moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven,)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings—

ISRAFEL

The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love's a grown up God—
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit—

ISRAFEL

Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervour of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
Is a world of sweets and sour;
Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

SONG

I saw thee on thy bridal day—

When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee :

And in thine eye a kindling light
(Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame—
As such it well may pass—
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas !

SONG

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
When that deep blush *would* come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay ;
The world all love before thee.

TO —

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see
The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips—and all thy melody
Of lip-begotten words—

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined,
Then desolately fall,
O God! on my funereal mind
Like starlight on a pall—

Thy heart—*thy* heart!—I wake and sigh,
And sleep to dream till day
Of the truth that gold can never buy—
Of the baubles that it may.

FAIRY-LAND

DIM vales—and shadowy floods—
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over
Huge moons there wax and wane—
Again—again—again—
Every moment of the night—
Forever changing places—
And they put out the star-light
With the breath from their pale faces.
About twelve by the moon-dial,
One more filmy than the rest
(A kind which, upon trial,
They have found to be the best)

FAIRY-LAND

Comes down—still down—and down,
With its centre on the crown
Of a mountain's eminence,
While its wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be—
O'er the strange woods—o'er the sea—
Over spirits on the wing—
Over every drowsy thing—
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light—
And then, how deep!—O, deep!
Is the passion of their sleep.
In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,

FAIRY-LAND

Like——almost anything——
Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before—
Videlicet a tent—
Which I think extravagant :
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,
Of which those butterflies,
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again
(Never-contented things!)
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.



THE COLISEUM

TYPE of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length—at length—after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)

THE COLISEUM

I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—
O spells more sure than e'er Judaeen king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!

THE COLISEUM

Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the hornèd moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones!

But stay! these walls—these ivy-clad arcades—
These mouldering plinths—these sad and blackened
shafts—

These vague entablatures—this crumbling frieze—
These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—
These stones—alas! these grey stones—are they all—
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?

‘Not all’—the Echoes answer me—‘not all!
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.

THE COLISEUM

We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent—we pallid stones.
Not all the power is gone—not all our fame—
Not all the magic of our high renown—
Not all the wonder that encircles us—
Not all the mysteries that in us lie—
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.'

DREAMLAND

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the tears that drip all over;

DREAMLAND

Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore ;
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire ;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters—lone and dead,—
Their still waters—still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily—
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—
By the grey woods,—by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp,—
By the dismal tarns and pools

DREAMLAND

Where dwell the Ghouls,—
By each spot the most unholy—
In each nook most melancholy,—
There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the Past—
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by—
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region—
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis—oh, 'tis an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it!
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed;

DREAMLAND

So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid ;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

FOR ANNIE

THANK Heaven! the crisis—
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last—
And the fever called 'Living'
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length—
But no matter!—I feel
I am better at length.

FOR ANNIE

And I rest so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead—
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart:—ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing!

The sickness—the nausea—
The pitiless pain—
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain—

FOR ANNIE

With the fever called 'Living'
That burned in my brain.

And oh! of all torture
That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
Torture of thirst
For the naphthaline river
Of Passion accurst :—
I have drunk of a water
That quenches all thirst :—

Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground—
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

FOR ANNIE

And ah! let it never
Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
And narrow my bed;
For man never slept
In a different bed—
And, *to sleep*, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
Here blandly reposes.
Forgetting, or never
Regretting its roses—
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses;

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies

u

FOR ANNIE

A holier odour
 About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odour,
 Commingled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
 Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
 Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
 And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
 Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
 She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
 To sleep on her breast

FOR ANNIE

Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished
She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm—
To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
Now, in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
That you fancy me dead—

FOR ANNIE

That you shudder to look at me,
Thinking me dead;—

But my heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

ALONE

FROM childhood's hour I have not been
As others were; I have not seen
As others saw; I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone;
And all I loved *I* loved alone.
Then—in my childhood, in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From every depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still:

ALONE

From the torrent, or the fountain,
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that round me rolled
In its autumn tint of gold,
From the lightning in the sky
As it passed me flying by,
From the thunder and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.



TAMERLANE

KIND solace in a dying hour!

Such, father, is not (now) my theme—
I will not madly deem that power
Of Earth may shrive me of the sin
Unearthly pride hath revell'd in—
I have no time to dote or dream:

TAMERLANE

You call it hope—that fire of fire!
It is but agony of desire :
If I *can* hope—O God! I can—
 Its fount is holier—more divine—
I would not call thee fool, old man,
 But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit
 Bow'd from its wild pride into shame.
O yearning heart! I did inherit
 Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again—
O craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours!
The undying voice of that dead time,



TAMERLANE

With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.

I have not always been as now :
The fever'd diadem on my brow
 I claim'd and won usurpingly—
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given
 Rome to the Cæsar—this to me?
 The heritage of a kingly mind,
And a proud spirit which hath striven
 Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life :
 The mists of the Taglay have shed
 Nightly their dews upon my head,
And, I believe, the wingèd strife

TAMERLANE

And tumult of the headlong air
Have nestled in my very hair.

So late from Heaven—that dew—it fell
 ('Mid dreams of an unholy night)
Upon me with the touch of Hell,
 While the red flashing of the light
From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,
 Appeared to my half-closing eye
 The pageantry of monarchy,
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
 Came hurriedly upon me, telling
 Of human battle, where my voice,
My own voice, silly child!—was swelling
 (O! how my spirit would rejoice,
And leap within me at the cry)
The battle-cry of Victory!

TAMERLANE

The rain came down upon my head
Unshelter'd—and the heavy wind
Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.
It was but man, I thought, who shed
Laurels upon me : and the rush—
The torrent of the chilly air
Gurgled within my ear the crush
Of empires—with the captive's prayer—
The hum of suitors—and the tone
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,
Usurp'd a tyranny which men
Have deem'd since I have reach'd to power,
My innate nature—be it so :
But father, there liv'd one who, then,
Then—in my boyhood—when their fire
Burn'd with a still intenser glow,

TAMERLANE

(For passion must, with youth, expire)
E'en *then* who knew this iron heart
In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words—alas!—to tell
The loveliness of loving well!
Nor would I now attempt to trace
The more than beauty of a face
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
Are —— shadows on th' unstable wind:
Thus I remember having dwelt
Some page of early lore upon,
With loitering eye, till I have felt
The letters—with their meaning—melt
To fantasies—with none.

O, she was worthy of all love!
Love—as in infancy was mine—

TAMERLANE

'Twas such as angel minds above
Might envy; her young heart the shrine
On which my every hope and thought
Were incense—then a goodly gift,
For they were childish and upright—
Pure—as her young example taught:
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
Trust to the fire within, for light?

We grew in age—and love—together,
Roaming the forest, and the wild;
My breast her shield in wintry weather—
And, when the friendly sunshine smil'd
And she would mark the opening skies,
I saw no Heaven—but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is—the heart:
For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,

TAMERLANE

When, from our little cares apart,
 And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
 And pour my spirit out in tears—
There was no need to speak the rest—
 No need to quiet any fears
Of her—who ask'd no reason why,
But turned on me her quiet eye!

Yet *more* than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone—
I had no being—but in thee:
 The world, and all it did contain
In the earth—the air—the sea—
 Its joy—its little lot of pain
That was new pleasure—the ideal,

TAMERLANE

Dim vanities of dreams by night—
And dimmer nothings which were real—
 (Shadows—and a more shadowy light!)
Parted upon their misty wings,
 And, so, confusedly, became
 Thine image, and—a name—a name!
Two separate—yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious—have you known
 The passion, father? You have not:
A cottager, I mark'd a throne
Of half the world as all my own,
 And murmur'd at such lowly lot—
But, just like any other dream,
 Upon the vapour of the dew
My own had past, did not the beam
 Of beauty which did while it thro'

TAMERLANE

The minute—the hour—the day—oppress
My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown
Of a high mountain which look'd down
Afar from its proud natural towers
 Of rock and forest, on the hills—
The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers,
 And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,
 But mystically—in such guise
That she might deem it nought beside
 The moment's converse; in her eyes
I read, perhaps too carelessly—
 A mingled feeling with my own—
The flush on her bright cheek, to me
 Seem'd to become a queenly throne

TAMERLANE

Too well that I should let it be
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then,
And donn'd a visionary crown—
Yet it was not that Fantasy
Had thrown her mantle over me—
But that, among the rabble—men,
Lion ambition is chained down—
And crouches to a keeper's hand—
Not so in deserts where the grand—
The wild—the terrible conspire
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand!
Is not she queen of Earth? her pride
Above all cities? in her hand
Their destinies? in all beside

TAMERLANE

Of glory which the world hath known
Stands she not nobly and alone?
Falling—her veriest stepping-stone
Shall form the pedestal of a throne—
And who her sovereign? Timour—he
Whom the astonished people saw
Striding o'er empires haughtily
A diadem'd outlaw!

O, human love! thou spirit given,
On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!
Which fall'st into the soul like rain
Upon the Siroc-wither'd plain,
And, failing in thy power to bless,
But leav'st the heart a wilderness!
Idea! which bindest life around
With music of so strange a sound,

TAMERLANE

And beauty of so wild a birth—
Farewell! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see
 No cliff beyond him in the sky,
His pinions were bent droopingly—
 And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye.
'Twas sunset : when the sun will part
There comes a sullenness of heart
To him who still would look upon
The glory of the summer sun.
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist,
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits hearken) as one
Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly
But *cannot*, from a danger nigh.

TAMERLANE

What tho' the moon—the white moon
Shed all the splendour of her noon,
Her smile is chilly, and *her* beam,
In that time of dreariness, will seem
(So like you gather in your breath)
A portrait taken after death.
And boyhood is a summer sun
Whose waning is the dreariest one—
For all we live to know is known,
And all we seek to keep hath flown—
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
With the noon-day beauty—which is all.
I reach'd my home—my home no more—
 For all had flown who made it so.
I pass'd from out its mossy door,
 And, tho' my tread was soft and low,
A voice came from the threshold stone
Of one whom I had earlier known—

TAMERLANE

O, I defy thee, Hell, to show
On beds of fire that burn below,
A humbler heart—a deeper woe.

Father, I firmly do believe—

I *know*—for Death, who comes for me
From regions of the blest afar,
Where there is nothing to deceive,
Hath left his iron gate ajar,
And rays of truth you cannot see
Are flashing thro' Eternity——

I do believe that Eblis hath
A snare in every human path—
Else how, when in the holy grove
I wandered of the idol, Love,
Who daily scents his snowy wings
With incense of burnt offerings
From the most unpolluted things,

TAMERLANE

Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven
No mote may shun—no tiniest fly—
The light'ning of his eagle eye—
How was it that Ambition crept,
 Unseen, amid the revels there,
Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt
 In the tangles of Love's very hair?

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